

CHAPTER 3 – Unit Awards Authorized and Their Criteria

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CHAPTER 3. UNIT AWARDS AUTHORIZED AND THEIR CRITERIA.

- A. General Discussion. The ensuing paragraphs detail the military unit commendations authorized for awarding, by precedence, by Department of Transportation (DOT)/Coast Guard awarding authorities. Those unit awards, that must be approved by Department of Defense (DOD)/Navy for Coast Guard members when operating with or under DOD/Navy are listed in paragraph 3.C. The precedence order for all decorations (military and non-military) authorized for wear and the applicability of the “O” and “V” devices are listed on Table 1 in Chapter 1.
1. Eligibility Requirements. The general eligibility requirements for unit awards are:
 - a. Personnel of all designated units are authorized to wear the award ribbon subject to the conditions below.
 - b. For Coast Guard unit awards approved on or after 31 January 1983, all Active Duty Coast Guard, Coast Guard Reserve, and Coast Guard Auxiliary, U.S. Military, civilians, and Foreign Military personnel, are eligible for the award if the person was assigned or attached to the cited unit and was present during at least 50 percent of the award period.
 - (1) Commanding Officers/Officers-in-Charge of cited units may recommend eligibility for other personnel who did not meet the time criteria, but who directly and positively contributed to the unit's outstanding performance. However, the awarding authority will make the final decision in these cases.
 - (2) If a person's behavior during the cited period was considered detrimental or obstructive to the unit's high performance, even though the member may have met the 50 percent criteria, then the unit award may be denied or revoked for that person. The Commanding Officer/Officer-in-Charge must provide documentation, such as from service record entries, NJP, or courts-martial. The awarding authority will make the final decision in these cases.
 2. Submission. Recommendations may be forwarded to the area or district commander, or Headquarters Directorate, as appropriate. The recommendations will be prepared as follows:
 - a. Recommendations for the CG Meritorious Unit Commendation shall be prepared on the CG-1650 form and will be accompanied by a proposed citation. The citation must capture the essence of the unit accomplishments.
 - b. Recommendations for the CG Unit Commendation shall be prepared on the CG-1650 form and should include the following:

- (1) A narrative justification containing sufficient data, in the light of the eligibility criteria, to enable the reviewing and approving authorities to adequately consider the recommendation. Supporting documents may be attached.
 - (2) A complete list of all units/teams/individuals recommended for participation, including staffs when appropriate, with dates of attachments to the recommended unit. Previous unit awards that have been approved or recommended for any units on the list should be noted. If there have been no previous unit awards for the cited period, a statement to this effect should be included.
 - (3) A proposed citation, drafted at the first level awarding authority or by the originator if at the district staff level.
 - (4) A complete listing of all eligible military personnel (including SSN and grade/rate), civilian personnel, and CG Auxiliary personnel (including member number and current office held), broken down into the following categories:
 - (a) Personnel meeting the 50 percent criteria or specifically recommended;
 - (b) Personnel not meeting the 50 percent criteria or specifically not recommended in accordance with paragraph 3.A.1.b.(2) above (attach justification). When computing the 50 percent time criteria, all leave, TAD, and "bad time" is deducted. Normal liberty is not deducted except if applicable for extremely short award periods.
3. Presentation. An original, signed citation is prepared and forwarded for presentation at an appropriate award ceremony. (Note: The Coast Guard "E" Ribbon is not accompanied by a citation.) Ribbon bars and accompanying facsimile citations to represent unit awards are issued to eligible personnel. Lapel pins in lieu of ribbon bars are issued to eligible civilian personnel. The commanding officer of the cited unit is responsible for ensuring eligible personnel receive a copy of the citation and ribbon bar or lapel pin. In the case of transferred personnel, the cited unit should promptly forward elements to the new duty station for appropriate presentation. The commanding officer of the cited unit will notify Commandant (G-WPM-1) when the award has been made to all eligible personnel (do not send copies of individual authorizations).

B. Unit Awards Authorized by the Department of Transportation/U.S. Coast Guard.

1. Department of Transportation Outstanding Unit Award. Awarded to any unit that has distinguished itself by exemplary service to the nation not involving combat but in support of Department of Transportation/Coast Guard operations which renders the unit outstanding compared to other units performing similar service. Since the operations that merit the Department of Transportation Outstanding Unit Award are unique and usually very broad in scope, there are no standard opening or commendatory remarks for the award citations.
2. Coast Guard Unit Commendation. Awarded to any unit that has distinguished itself by valorous or extremely meritorious service not involving combat but in support of Coast Guard operations which renders the unit outstanding compared to other units performing similar service.
 - a. Standard Opening Phrase for Citations. “For exceptionally meritorious service from (starting date) to (ending date) while . . .”
 - b. Standard Commendatory Remarks for Citations. “The professionalism, pride, and devotion to duty displayed by (unit name) are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard.”
 - c. A sample citation follows:

[**Sample citation**]

3. Coast Guard Meritorious Unit Commendation. Awarded to any unit of the Coast Guard that has distinguished itself by either valorous or meritorious achievement or service in support of Coast Guard operations not involving combat which renders the unit outstanding compared to other units performing similar service but not sufficient to justify the award of the Coast Guard Unit Commendation. The Commandant may also confer the award upon a unit of other branches of the Armed Forces of the United States, provided such unit meets the standards established for Coast Guard units. To justify the award, the service performed as a unit must be of a character comparable to that which would at least merit the award of the Coast Guard Achievement medal to an individual. Normal performance of duty or participation in a large number of operational missions does not in itself justify the award. An award will not be made to a large unit for actions of one or more of its component parts unless such unit performed as a total team in a manner justifying the award.
 - a. Standard Opening Phrase for Citations. “For meritorious service from (starting date) to (ending date) while . . .”

- b. Standard Commendatory Remarks for Citations. “The devotion to duty and outstanding performance demonstrated by (unit name) are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard.”

- c. A sample citation follows:

[Sample citation]

- 4. Coast Guard Meritorious Team Commendation. Awarded to groups or teams that do not constitute a Coast Guard unit; i.e., non-OPFAC small groups. To justify the award, the individual members of the groups must have performed service that made a significant contribution to the group's overall outstanding accomplishment of a study, process, mission, etc. The service performed as a group or team must be of a character comparable to that which would merit the award of the Commandant's Letter of Commendation or higher to an individual. The award of the Meritorious Team Commendation Ribbon does not preclude individuals whose service on a team or group is truly outstanding from being recognized with a personal award for the same action/period recognized.

- a. Standard Opening Phrase for Citations. “For exceptionally meritorious service from (starting date) to (ending date) while serving on (name of team or group . . .”
- b. Standard Commendatory Remarks for Citations. “The dedication, pride, and professionalism displayed by (team or group name) are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard.”

- c. A sample citation follows:

[Sample citation]

- 5. Coast Guard "E" Ribbon. Awarded by area commanders as visible recognition for personnel of Coast Guard cutters earning the overall operational readiness "E" award during Refresher Training, under the following conditions:
 - a. All personnel serving aboard their unit for more than 50 percent of the period during which it undergoes Refresher Training are eligible for the "E" Ribbon. Personnel serving less than 50 percent of the period, or personnel who are on leave or TAD during the evolution are not eligible, unless specifically recommended by the commanding officer.
 - b. Commanding officers/officers-in-charge may authorize the "E" Ribbon to any member of their command who previously served aboard the units listed in enclosure 10 to this Manual upon evidence of their assignment during the training period.

- c. With the exception of the units listed in the List of Eligible Cutters, enclosure 10 to this Manual, no permanent records of Refresher Training results exist. In order to recognize all ships' crews who have previously met the intent of this policy, individual Commands are encouraged to submit documentation to (G-WPM-1) which will facilitate the addition of those units to the list of eligible cutters.
 - d. Requests by individuals who served aboard units not listed in enclosure 10 to this Manual shall be forwarded to Commandant (G-WPM-1) for eligibility determination. Approval will be determined subject to supporting documentation accompanying the request. Examples of such supporting documentation include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - (1) Letters of appreciation;
 - (2) Personal award citations;
 - (3) Service record entries or any other documentation available from a member's service record; or
 - (4) Any other conclusive evidence that shows that a unit achieved an overall operational readiness "E" award during Refresher Training and the requesting individual was assigned to that unit during the designated Refresher Training period.
6. Coast Guard Bicentennial Unit Commendation. Awarded by the Commandant to all Coast Guard members, including selected Reservists, civilians, and Auxiliarists serving satisfactorily during any period from 4 June 1989 to 4 August 1990. The Bicentennial Unit Commendation may not be awarded to any individual whose entire service previous to 4 June 1989 is not honorable. Personnel of other Services who were assigned to and served with the Coast Guard during this period also are eligible for the award. (NOTE: The Operational Distinguishing Device is not authorized for this award.)
- C. Unit Awards Authorized by Department of Defense (DOD) (for Coast Guard members when operating with or under DOD.)
- 1. Presidential Unit Citation. Awarded in the name of the President of the United States to any unit of the Navy or Marine Corps for outstanding performance in action. Coast Guard personnel serving with a cited unit and meeting the eligibility criteria are eligible. The award may also be conferred upon units of armed forces of friendly foreign nations serving with the United States Armed Forces for outstanding performance in action, provided that such units meet the standards established for the United States Armed Forces.

2. Joint Meritorious Unit Award. Awarded by the Secretary of Defense to recognize a Joint Unit or Joint Activity for meritorious achievement or service superior to that which is normally expected, under one of the following conditions:
 - a. During action in combat with an armed enemy of the United States;
 - b. In a declared national emergency situation; or
 - c. Under extraordinary circumstances that involve the national interest. Coast Guard personnel serving with a cited unit and meeting eligibility criteria are eligible.
3. Navy Unit Commendation. Awarded by the Secretary of the Navy to any unit of the Navy, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard that has distinguished itself by outstanding heroism in action against the enemy, but not sufficient to justify the award of the Presidential Unit Citation; or to any such unit that has distinguished itself by extremely meritorious service not involving combat but in support of military operations, rendering the unit outstanding compared to other units performing similar service.
4. Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation. Awarded by the Secretary of the Navy to any unit of the Navy, Marine Corps or Coast Guard that has distinguished itself, under combat or noncombat conditions, by either valorous or meritorious achievement which renders the unit outstanding compared to other units performing similar service, but not sufficient to justify the award of the Navy Unit Commendation. Coast Guard personnel serving with a cited unit and meeting eligibility criteria are eligible.